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Y O U T H W A N T S

T O K N O W

Founded and Produced by Theodore Granik

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1958

YOUTH WANTS TO KNOW PRESENTS

VICTOR ZHDANOV

DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH, USSR

IRVING R. LEVINE

Moderator

THE ANNOUNCER: This is Moscow.

YOUTH WANTS TO KNOW, produced by Theodore Granik, is here in the first television exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States.

One of the principal targets of the Soviet government is the irradiation of disease and high priority has been

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given to the field of health and physical culture. Today's guest will be introduced by NBC Moscow's Bureau Chief, Irving R. Levine, to discuss these subjects with American students.

MR. LEVINE: Dr. Victor Zhdanov at 43, one of the youngest members of the Soviet government, is Deputy Minister of Health. He is an author, doctor and member of the Soviet Academy of Medical Sciences. Dr. Zhdanov recently visited the United States and was in charge of the Soviet delegation to the World Health Assembly in Minneapolis this June.

Mr. Minister, we are very pleased to have you with us here today and to answer the questions of these students representing the United Student Christian Science and the Lyle Fellowships.

MINISTER ZHDANOV: I am pleased to see your youth and am willing to answer any questions in which they are interested.

QUESTION: Dr. Zhdanov, what are the three most prevalent diseases in the Soviet Union today?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: I can name these diseases. They are first cardiovascular diseases, all diseases of the heart, cancer and also traumas.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, how many institutes do you have in the Soviet Union devoting their time to cancer research, let's say?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Three or four special institutes

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dealing with cancer. But a lot of chairs.

QUESTION: Do you have hopes of getting a cure for cancer in the very near future, Dr. Zhdanov?

DR. ZHDANOV: There are such hopes, of course, because of investigations which are going very successful, but when these manners and means will be found, it is difficult to say.

QUESTION: What has Soviet science discovered about the relationship between the work a worker does and the disease which he is most likely to contract?

DR. ZHDANOV: This problem was studied very carefully from the beginning of our State. It was established that bad conditions had an influence upon appearance of different professional diseases. This problem is too being solved now.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, are rigid physical examinations required of workers?

DR. ZHDANOV: Yes. Physical examinations, including laboratory tests, x-ray examination is one of the most important preventive measures for discovering early symptoms of diseases, for treatment of them and prevention, of course.

QUESTION: Is the follow-up of this done monthly or twice a year?

DR. ZHDANOV: Oh, no. It depends upon professional groups. In some instances this examination is being done

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once a year. In other cases, once, twice, or three times a year, and on some occasions, every month or two.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, I would like to change the subject a little bit and ask whether during the time lost when a worker is ill, whether he receives any financial compensation for the time he loses?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Practically, in fact he receives practically all his wages. Eighty or 90 percent of his wages. It depends on the time he serves.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, what specific restrictions does the Soviet Union have on the type of work that women may do?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: This restriction goes to difficult and hard work, physical qualities and so on and also some chemical and drug work. Some chemicals and drugs and other things that has an influence upon the health of a woman.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, is the Soviet Union making its records of epidemics and diseases available to international forums on medicine?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Of course. We write surveys, accounts -- not long ago for example, two months ago, I sent a large report upon the last Asian influenza epidemic which spread throughout this country and I wrote about measures which were taken to prevent and defeat disease.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, I have read the publication

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by the UN and I was not able to find any statistics on Soviet health. Can you give an explanation for that, please?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: You see this statistical data which is obtained in our country is being printed from time to time.

Now when we are active members of this organization we shall find from year to year many statistical data.

QUESTION: How soon can we expect to see that data in world publications, Mr. Zhdanov?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: It depends upon the data in which you are interested. There are some general rules in this organization, and in suitable time -- many data is already published, and further data will be published. If you are interested in current data, you could read it last year, and this year too.

QUESTION: I would like to ask, Mr. Minister, what the laws in the Soviet Union are about child labor?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: This law is very important. This law limits child labor completely up to 16. There is a limitation on a lot of different hard work and so on.

QUESTION: Would you make a comment on the provisions you have for maternity leave for mothers who are working at the time their child is expected?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes. There is such a limitation which consists of different things: Time free for feeding

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children, limitation of time, a large amount of time, two and more months before and after birth, and so on.

QUESTION: Mr. Zhdanov, are nursery school facilities available for mothers who work, as well as for mothers who are not working?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes.

In fact and practically they are the rights of every mother who wants to educate her children in such institutions.

QUESTION: At what age do they enter the nursery school?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: There is no limitation. There is practically no limitation. From zero, practically, or practically from six months to three or four years, and kindergartens from three or four years to school age. That is seven years.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, you spoke just a moment ago about having a two months leave for a mother after her child is borne. Is there any hope in the future of having legislation passed that would extend this period so that the mother could be with her child through all the early years?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Practically every mother can have increased time for this avocation, one might say. But from year to year this legislation improves further.

QUESTION: To go on to another subject, in the USSR are patients permitted to select their own physicians or

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are the physicians chosen for the people by the State?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Of course. Of course. Most of the population prefers to select the physician who serves the district but there is no limitation for choice of a doctor.

QUESTION: How many patients would a general practitioner see each day on the average?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: It depends on different things. Practically, it is 20, or 30. Not more. It depends upon the situation in each district, in the treating of disease and preventive measures which are taken in each district, too.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, what is the doctor-patient ratio throughout the USSR?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: The doctor-patient ratio is one to 625. It is for our population, 350,000 physicians or doctors.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, are there any private practitioners of medicine remaining in the USSR, or are they all associated with the State Health Organization?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Practically they didn't remain. Although there are no limitations on that.

However, for what reason should one go to a private doctor if a patient can receive all facilities, all medical treatment which he needs?

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, what medical care is

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available to the artisan who does not work for the State?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Their difference -- no different. The main difference consists in wages which are paid during his disease due to his absenteeism. But there is no difference between medical care for different parts of the population.

QUESTION: Sir, what provisions are made to transfer patients from an area which may be some distance from Moscow where you have the medical center?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: If you are interested in medical cure of transport workers, they have a special transport medical organization, in the body of all public health. For medical assistance for population scattered in different areas, we felt such a system is healthy variation and many airplanes are used for this purpose.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, when a patient is admitted to a hospital, will the doctor who sees the patient originally continue the treatment until he is dismissed, or is there the possibility that different doctors will see him?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: As a rule, a general practitioner, or rather a family doctor who is working in the district works for half a day in the hospital, so he has the possibility to observe and treat his patient in the hospital and to observe him after returning home too.

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QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, how many mental hospitals do you have and how many patients are in these hospitals, do you know, by any chance?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: I don't remember this figure, but I suppose that the amount of this hospitalization is sufficient, or almost sufficient.

QUESTION: Dr. Zhdanov, do you happen to know what the most prevalent treatment is for mental illness in this country?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: It is no different. All modern methods of treatment have been used, including some physiological procedures, including surgical operation, and including use of different drugs and so on.

I suppose that the mode of treatment of this disease is international and the exchange of ideas which is in the world gives the possibility to use all modern methods in our country.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, what facilities are available for the treatment of high-grade mental defectives?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: If such a patient needs lasting, curable hospitalization, he is placed in such hospitals or institutions.

QUESTION: Sir, is hypnosis used in medical treatment in the Soviet Union?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Before answering this question, I

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forgot to make two remarks on previous questions.

First, why the private practice is not widespread in this country. Because all medical treatment, all medical cure is free of charge. It is nonsense to pay money for the possibility of receiving the same aid and treatment.

QUESTION: Sir, is hypnosis used in the Soviet Union?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Hypnosis is being used, of course, as an important part of medical cure, not only for treatment of diseases but also in help during birth and so on.

QUESTION: Is there an adequate supply of anesthesia in all the hospitals in the Republics and summer camps and so on?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Oh, yes. We have special anesthesiologists in all large hospitals, in average hospitals in different Republics.

QUESTION: Do doctors run the hospitals in which they work?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Who manages, you ask? Physicians, doctors are managing hospitals. I believe they understand the best how to manage.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, how is a man graduating from medical school placed in his profession?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: They start as general practitioners. In two, three or four years, they receive the possibility to have more narrow specialization and after that they can

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improve their knowledge in a post-graduate school and in large clinics too.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, what percentage of the doctors are women?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Seventy.

QUESTION: Could you say why they have so many women?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: They have gentle hands.

QUESTION: Do you have an internal program in your hospitals where doctors may specialise in virology and so forth after they have received their education?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Not in hospitals. We have post-graduate institutes where these people specialize in virology and other narrow specialties.

QUESTION: Sir, what is the comparison of pay for a doctor, say, with a skilled worker, or with perhaps a ballerina?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: I can tell you that doctors receive enough money to live good and I am not interested in the life of a ballerina. I prefer to see them, and enjoy them.

QUESTION: How much money is this in actual figures in comparison between the skilled worker and the medical doctor?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: It depends upon the ability of the doctor and the skilled worker. It depends on the durability of his work. I mean his time and experience. It is difficult to compare.

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QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, is the polio vaccine used at present in the Soviet Union?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes. We are using polio vaccine, in which I prefer Dr. Salk's methods.

By the way our biologists visited Dr. Salk, I visited him too. It is a good vaccine and we are using it, but we are improving it and trying to obtain a live vaccine because it will solve the whole problem of combating and prevention of disease.

QUESTION: The Salk vaccine then has proven effective in the Soviet Union?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Oh, yes. It decreases the immobility way three, five, six times and even more.

QUESTION: Dr. Zhdanov, could you tell us in non-technical terms just how the vaccine is being improved in the Soviet Union?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes. First, change of strains. You know in your country there was some experience, and dangerous experience in some instances where virus strains had given immobility. We changed the strains and are using only mild ones. This is the principal thing.

Further, there are some technical improvements, and as I told you, the most important thing in terms of the future is the obtaining of a live vaccine.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, are there any special

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schools or facilities available for polio victims?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes. We have organized many centers in large cities of our country for treatment and rehabilitation of polio patients.

QUESTION: Sir, what are the standards governing food inspection? What are the standards?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: You see the question you raise touches the work of State sanitary inspection. This inspection elaborates food standards and not only food standards, hygienic standards for all branches of industry which have an influence on the health of the population. It controls through local branches and local authorities all these standards.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, you spoke of certain hygiene measures. I wonder if you would comment on the following: Walking around Moscow I have seen many sidewalk vendors who sell fruit juices in glasses. I notice that they have only five or six glasses for a whole day's customers. I wonder if you would comment on this, sir, as a public health menace, perhaps.

MINISTER ZHDANOV: I can tell you that it is one example of the lack of our local authority. It is a good remark.

QUESTION: Is something being done about this now?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Oh, yes.

QUESTION: Could you tell us what?

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MINISTER ZHDANOV: To substitute for glasses and give better control.

QUESTION: Sir, is there any discussion in the use of fluoridation?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: There is a discussion of this question but there is no agreement among our dentists as to whether it is necessary or not. Experimental work has been done but it is not yet widespread.

QUESTION: Along this same line, Minister Zhdanov, what precautions do you take in the Soviet Union to insure that the public water supply is safe for drinking?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: I am proud to say that most of the water is of the best. There are strict sanitary provisions. There are strict limitations around the sources of the water supply. It is a good deal of work for Central Inspection.

QUESTION: Could you tell us what percentage of the people in the Soviet Union have available to them purified water?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Practically in all large cities, in all towns and now in many villages.

QUESTION: What about milk, Mr. Minister?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: The same thing, because milk can't be sold without sanitary supervision.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, is your milk pasteurized?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes.

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QUESTION: Sir, going back to Salk vaccine, could you give us the approximate number of injections made last year?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Up to now we practically made three million injections. The program which was elaborated includes many million injections in recent years, but it is not necessary to inject every child in our country because this disease is not so widely spread. It is in many localities, but not everywhere.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, must a person participate in your physical fitness program?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes. Most of the population participates in it.

QUESTION: Are the policies of sports that the factories have under your supervision?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Well, yes. Physical culture is being supervised as medical service because it is a part of the physical development, physical education of the people. It includes all the health education.

QUESTION: Are there special scholarships available for your sportsmen at your institutions?

MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes. Maybe too many.

QUESTION: Minister Zhdanov, I would like to ask if you have special physical fitness programs for young people who may have slight physical handicaps, or serious physical handicaps?

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MINISTER ZHDANOV: Yes, yes, special programs and special studies, but I am sorry, my time is already finished and I was very pleased to meet you American youth, you who are so interested in medical problems. I should like to send my deep greetings to the good American youth whom I met in my stay in the United States.

Thank you.

MR. LEVINE: Minister Zhdanov, we are most grateful to you for providing the answers that YOUTH WANTS TO KNOW, and for being our guest today.

This is the last in a series of special programs from Soviet Russia brought to you exclusively by the National Broadcasting Company and YOUTH WANTS TO KNOW.

And now this is Irving R. Levine in Moscow, bidding you good bye on behalf of Theodore Granik.

THE ANNOUNCER: Irving R. Levine, NBC's Bureau Chief in the Soviet Union.

For reprints of today's discussion, send ten cents to Ransdell, Inc., Printers and Publishers, Washington 18, D. C.

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